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Abstracts

# Education

**Program/Abstract # 77**
**Designing an effective poster: How to emphasize your message**
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This poster is the first of two designed to help you develop a presentation that successfully emphasizes your science and its importance. This poster relates good practices for generating a presentation that is convincing. The second poster relates the dreadful consequences of common bad practices. Designing a good poster requires you to think of what your audience needs most to understand your science: simplicity, clarity, emphasis. A good poster develops a SINGLE message. Moreover, the poster is clear: all its elements are marshaled to emphasize your message. Your message is not swamped by extraneous detail. You may be tempted to use a publication format, but simply supplying pages from a paper is clearly ineffective. The elements that convince in a paper require a big time investment from a reader but, at poster sessions, your audience lacks time to consider details. A poster requires a different design. For an effective poster, your presentation must be visual. Avoiding telling in mind-numbing detail: You must show. Express your points in graphical terms. Use figures. Use color-coded graphs that do not need keys to understand. Guide the viewer by using a visual logic, a hierarchical structure to emphasize main points. Avoid visual chaos, with distracting organization. Instead, display the essential content in the title, main headings and graphics. Remember that essential content is not the methods or the detailed data: Essential content is the conclusion of each experiment. Indicate the relative importance of elements graphically: BIG is important; small is unimportant (and can likely be discarded). Make your message obvious and memorable even from a distance, to attract and convince.

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**Program/Abstract # 78**
**Designing an ineffective poster: How to obscure your message**
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This poster is the second of two posters designed to help you develop a poster presentation that successfully emphasizes your science and its importance. The first poster relates good practices for generating a convincing presentation. This poster relates practices that are common but dreadful. If your motivation is to celebrate your work, view these examples as avoidable pitfalls. Designing a good poster requires you to consider what your audience needs most to understand your sciencesimplicity, clarity, emphasis. To design a poster to prevent your audience from understanding your science, you must avoid all these qualities. First, make your poster complicated. Present all the data you ever produced, relevant or irrelevant. Plaster the entire poster surface with words. Use complex tables without legends. Use complex graphs but hide the keys. Scatter figures at random. Second, be obscure. Avoid explaining data or conclusions. Raw data is best. Maybe post pages from your lab book! In a conclusions section, merely list the data again and let the audience interpret the date themselves. Third, avoid emphasis. Make all type the same size. Or use headings that are useless, e.g. Method #1. Avoid using color to emphasize: better yet, randomly use every color available in the PowerPoint pallet. If you cannot avoid emphasis, then emphasize the irrelevant. For instance, emphasize the background: swirls of chartreuse and purple distract well. Emphasize small details with huge typeface; hide important statements with tiny type. Better yet, simply omit anything worthy of emphasis. Make your message so obscure and forgettable that it repels and confuses your potential audience, even from a distance.

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**Program/Abstract # 79**
**Using writing to teach developmental biology, using developmental biology to teach writing**
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Writing at the University of Redlands is taught via a Writing Across the Curriculum program. Students complete two writing-intensive courses, one at the lower level (WA) and one in the junior or senior year that concentrates on writing within the major discipline (WB). Both are taught by faculty of all disciplines who are trained in a three day workshop. Biology 348, the upper division developmental biology course, is taught as a WB course. A variety of writing assignments are used. Students are evaluated at the start of the semester by writing on both scientific and non-scientific topics. They write one full lab report, with revision, with other lab reports concentrating on specific writing skills often deficient in student reports. They also write a term paper discussing two primary sources in detail. This paper is peer reviewed and revised. Students collaborate in groups of four to deliver 80minute lectures based on the chapters corresponding to these topics. There is also a journal club component in lecture, with a writing exercise designed to teach